

South Dakota State University  
**Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional  
Repository and Information Exchange**

---

Theses and Dissertations

---

1932

# Juvenile Delinquency in Brookings County, South Dakota

Cathryn Schaefer

Follow this and additional works at: <http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Schaefer, Cathryn, "Juvenile Delinquency in Brookings County, South Dakota" (1932). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1927.  
<http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/etd/1927>

This Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact [michael.biondo@sdstate.edu](mailto:michael.biondo@sdstate.edu).

**JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**  
**IN BROOKINGS COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA**

by  
**Cathryn Schaefer**

Submitted to the Faculty  
of  
**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE**  
of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts

**June, 1932**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science

**LIBRARY**

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**  
State College of Agr  
Mech. Arts



## Table of Contents

- I. Juvenile Courts and their Jurisdiction.
  - A. Origin of specialized children's courts.
  - B. Establishment of juvenile court in Brookings County.
  - C. Jurisdiction of juvenile courts under South Dakota law.
- II. Scope of Inquiry.
  - A. Meaning of the term delinquent.
  - B. Material and method.
- III. An Ecological Study of Delinquent Cases.
  - A. Ecological distribution of delinquent cases in Brookings County.
  - B. Residential areas of juvenile delinquents in the city of Brookings.
- IV. Statistical Analysis of Delinquent Cases.
  - A. Summary of Delinquencies by year.
  - B. Sex of juvenile offenders.
  - C. Seasonal fluctuations in delinquency.
  - D. Age of delinquents.
  - E. Nature of offense.
  - F. Court disposition of cases.
  - G. School achievement of delinquents in city of Brookings.
- V. Case Studies.
- VI. Conclusions.

30822

## Chapter I

### Juvenile Courts and Their Jurisdiction

#### A. Origin of Specialized Children's Courts

The origin of the court is lost in the mist of antiquity. The earliest codes of laws known to us present the picture of efforts to do away with troubles and disputes between members of the community. In the code of Hammurabi, dating from the 24th century B.C., we find the judge, witnesses, and the elements of judicial procedure. In the earliest codes of the Bible we find already set up judges, methods of procedure and judicial practices which show a long previous history.

Whether in primitive societies, in ancient civilization, or in communities of today, courts of justice play a very important part. When men attempt to live together they find it necessary to adjust their difficulties through the intervention of some third party who will be removed from the feelings which trouble always engenders.

Always the important functions of the court have been:

(1) "The redress of wrongs, (2) the conviction of the guilty, (3) the protection of the innocent, (4) the harmony of society."<sup>1</sup> When the courts fail to furnish this protection, the primary reason for their existence is gone. Whenever, as in a frontier mining camp, numbers of strangers

1. Gillin, J. L., *Criminology and Penology*,  
pp. 748-749.

have congregated before courts were in existence, men have improvised instruments of justice in order to preserve peace protect the property and secure the person of the inhabitants. Thus, the idea of a court system gradually grew and today extends over nations as a means of administering justice.

The history of the juvenile court covers less than a quarter-century, but its roots extend far back into English jurisprudence. "That ancient institution, the English High Court of Chancery, keeper of the King's conscience, in applying the principles of equity to cases in which the rigid rules of law alone would not bring justice, was called upon to exercise the prerogative of the Crown in behalf of children whose property or welfare was in jeopardy."<sup>1</sup> In England the state was the ultimate parent of those who are unable to care for themselves and have no other lawful protectors. In the United States the power of the state to assume control and jurisdiction over the persons and property of minors was affirmed in a number of cases which arose during the 19th century.

The first step in the modification of court procedure in children's cases--aside from the doctrine that children of tender years were not to be held "criminally responsible" for their action--was taken in Massachusetts in 1863, when separate sessions of the court were required by law for the

1. Annals of American Academy, 105, pp. 113-123.

trial of juveniles. Massachusetts also led in the establishment of a probation system. Probation consists in placing the individual under the supervision of the court for a specified time and requiring the individual meanwhile to follow a certain designated regimen of life. It includes social investigation, interviewing, the adjusting of cases by the probation or social service staff, and especially, the after care or follow-up work with children before the court, not committed to the more specialized and intensive care of an institution. Probation laws were gradually enacted in a few other states in the later part of the 19th century. 2

In 1899 Illinois enacted the first law bringing under one jurisdiction--that of a court especially organized for children's work--cases involving delinquent, neglected, and dependent children. This law provided for practically all the essential features of the juvenile court as it exists today. The state acknowledged its obligation to save (not to punish) delinquent as well as dependent children. Separate hearings, detention apart from adults and probation all were provided.

By 1910 legislation authorizing probation in children's cases was in force in thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia. However, in this first period juvenile court organization was developed mainly in the larger cities.

The first juvenile courts had to develop new modes of preliminary procedure, new methods of conducting hearings; they had to extend the conception of evidence to include

the social and personal facts concerning the child's environment and the child himself, and work out a technique for the gathering of such facts; they had to develop methods of supervision over children in their own homes that would by their results justify the probation system--a method of disposing of cases which though not unknown, was in the main undeveloped at the beginning of the juvenile court movement.

To perform these many duties, the first courts had very meager staffs.

The importance of the probation service and its public character was soon recognized, and in many of the larger cities, it was not long before the agencies were able to turn over the work of investigation and supervision to regular probation officers paid from public funds.

The early literature of the juvenile court movement reveals that judges and probation officers were thinking constructively, in terms of the child and not of legalistic tradition. The judge in his informal hearing was endeavoring to gain the child's point of view and to make the child know that he was trying to be an understanding friend. The purpose of the officers was not only supervision to keep the child from doing wrong, but constructive effort to enrich his interests, implant right ideals and encourage the formation of sound habits. It is of interest to note how early the cooperation of the schools was utilized; in fact, the report system was in some courts based largely on teachers' reports of scholarship and conduct. Not until

the close of the first decade of juvenile court did scientific study of the child's mental abilities, personality and mental life begin.

Another development during the first decade of the juvenile court deserves special notice. In 1903, an act drafted by Judge Lindsey, making those responsible for contributing to the delinquency of a child guilty of a misdemeanor, was passed by the Colorado Legislature. This precedent has been widely followed.

With this introductory material as a base we turn to the study of juvenile delinquency in a South Dakota County.

#### B. Establishment of Juvenile Court in Brookings County.

This study of juvenile delinquency in Brookings County, South Dakota should perhaps be prefaced by a brief statement of the conditions which led to the establishment of the juvenile court of Brookings County. These conditions are of importance since they were in general such as existed in other parts of the state at the time of the enactment of the South Dakota law in 1909. They must also be taken into consideration in weighing the unquestionable imperfections which still survive in the organization of juvenile courts and in their resources.

Until the opening of the juvenile court of Brookings County, 1911, the offenses of Brookings County children were dealt with under the same laws and in the same courts as were the offenses of adults. Those that were not brought

before the adult courts were allowed to continue their criminal practices without being corrected in any way by the law, unless they became habitual in their acts. Usually the police courts had jurisdiction over most of the offenses for which children were held. Children who were arrested and unable to furnish bail, were sometimes, if the crimes were serious, placed in the cells of the police station, tried by the police justice, and if punished, they were sent to the county jail.

As to the effect of imprisonment, we have no way of measuring the intrinsic demoralization of a child from a prison term. However, Reformatory School sentences appear much more satisfactory with juveniles than a prison sentence with adult criminals.

Thus the true function of a juvenile court is to appeal to the child's better nature, to develop self-respect and self-control, to exert a firm but kindly restraint, to awaken worthy motives by sympathetic encouragement. There are cases, of course, which demand rigorous treatment, but in most instances better results will follow gentler methods. Throughout the whole community juvenile court should be looked upon as a beneficent child-saving institution, not at all as an institution for the punishment of the child.

Every case coming before the juvenile court involves the parents (if they are living) as well as the child; the child cannot be treated or even considered apart from his parents and his home. Whether it is a neglected or a delinquent child, he has generally been made such through



some fault or neglect of his parents; and in order to deal properly with the child, it is imperative that the court should have power to deal with the parents. Where home conditions are debasing, the juvenile court must have power to take the child away from its parents and place it under influences that are healthful for both body and the future character building of the child.

The child may be subjected to corrupting tendencies outside the home. Thus the juvenile court needs the power to protect the child by having before it all persons, and by subjecting them to the most drastic treatment in order that their corrupting influence over the child may be stopped.

These ends were reached in the legislation of South Dakota, first by the establishment of a juvenile court with original and general jurisdiction in law and equity, second by an act to punish parents or any other persons who are accountable for the conditions which rendered the child dependent, neglected or delinquent.

I am convinced that the usefulness of the juvenile court is dependent in the largest sense, upon the personal character of its presiding judge. It demands peculiar, and exceptional qualities--ability to comprehend the child's point of view and to really see the child's motives and feelings; power to win the child's confidence and to exert the personal influence thus gained with tact and wisdom; and over all a disposition to temper justice with extreme mercy.



### C. Jurisdiction of Juvenile Courts under South Dakota Law.

This inquiry into the work of the juvenile court and juvenile law was undertaken to make clear the meaning of the law and court procedure in dealing with delinquents. Before taking up the actual study of delinquency something must be said concerning South Dakota laws creating the juvenile court and its procedure.

The court deals under the statutes with three classes of children: (1) Dependent or neglected children under twenty-one years of age, that is children who are orphans, or deserted by both of their parents, having no suitable home, children who are supported in whole or in part by public charity, any child having corrupt or immoral parents, children whose parents or guardians are habitual drunkards or idlers; (2) delinquent children including the following, any child who, while under the age of eighteen years, violates any law of the State or any ordinance of a city or a town; children who are incorrigible or intractable by parents, guardian or custodian; any child who knowingly associates with thieves, or immoral persons; children who without consent of parents, guardian or custodian leave home; those growing up in idleness or crime; children who knowingly frequent or visit public poolrooms, etc.; children found alone with one of the opposite sex; those who wander about the streets in the night time without being on lawful business or working; children who drink intoxicating liquors,

who have been guilty of immoral or disorderly conduct; (3) truant children, children who fail to attend school regularly without proper reason, if of compulsory school age; children who repeatedly play truant from school; who do not regularly attend school and are not engaged in any regular occupation but who really loiter and idle away time.

The three different groups are brought into court for different causes, and are supposedly in need of different treatment. Every proceeding must be instituted by a petition on behalf of the state and in the interest of the child and the state giving regard to the rightful parents and others directly interested. In any proceeding the child must be dealt with, protected and cared for as a ward of the state. It is of importance to note that any resident of the state may file with the Clerk of Courts a petition setting forth that a certain child is dependent, neglected or delinquent. The petition must also contain the name of parents, guardians, or relative. After the petition is filed it is customary for the judge to issue a notice, which is in the form of a citation or summons, fixing the day and hour for the hearing. The parents are usually given five days notice previous to the time when they are to appear with the child in juvenile court. At this time the parents may show cause, if they have any, why the child should not be declared by the court to be dependent, neglected or delinquent. In case the child should fail to appear at the designated time, the court may require such persons responsible for its appearance to appear

in court and proceed against them as in cases of contempt of court. However, before such a step is undertaken, the judge determines in the opinion of the court if the individual in charge of the delinquent had a reasonable cause for failing to appear with the child at the specified time.

The law also provides that under no circumstances can a child under fifteen years of age be committed to a common jail, or even to a police station. If the child is over fifteen years of age, it is discretionary with the court to order or commit to care of an officer a child, but such a child shall be kept out of a jail if the court so orders. In counties having a population of 50,000 or over the county board of commissioners may provide a detention house where children coming under this article may be detained. The population of Brookings County does not warrant such an institution so it is left to the judge to appoint a probation officer or to find a suitable home for the child.

According to the State law the juvenile court officer is invested with the authority to allow the delinquent child to remain at its own home and reporting to a probation officer; the child may be taken from the custody of its parents or guardian and placed under the guardian of proper individuals in a suitable family home; the child may be boarded out in some home with the county paying the expense; the child may be committed to any institution that has been provided by the state, county, city, or town for the care of delinquent children. While in such a detention home or

school the child is under the care of the supervisor of the institution and is given medical treatment, training and an education in so far as that can be provided by the institution. Juvenile offenders committed to an institution from <sup>Brookings County</sup> Brookings County are sent to the State Training School at Plankington, South Dakota.

The court may from time to time summon guardians of any dependent, neglected or delinquent child to make a full, true and perfect report of the child. In this way the judge has a chance to check up on the guardians as to whether they are performing their just duties and if the child is receiving proper care, attention, and education.

If a child under eighteen years of age is arrested this individual is immediately taken before the county court. However, in case he had been brought before the municipal court, such a court willingly transfers the case to its proper court. The juvenile court proceeds to hear and dispose of the case in the same manner as if the child had been brought before the court upon petition originally filed.

As to probation officers, the county court is given authority to appoint any number of discreet persons of good moral character, to serve without compensation as probation officers, at the pleasure of the court. In cases affecting girls, the probation officers are to be women. Any person who is appointed as an officer is required to take an oath that he will perform his duties. Nothing limits the power

of the court, court to appoint as many persons as the court may see fit. officers, to serve without pay, as the court may see fit. Ministers in Brookings County have been very willing in lending their services as probation officers. Likewise attorneys, dentists, and other interested and reliable citizens have been successful in securing the officers.

A very simple and informal procedure is followed in each case. Only such persons as have a direct interest in the case, witnesses, officers of the court and persons interested in the study of social conditions are present. Records of the cases are kept. These records may be withheld from indiscriminate public inspection at the discretion of the court. The name of any child found on the juvenile court record does not in any way disqualify the child for any public office, nor is the individual to be looked down upon as a criminal. The court may suspend any sentence, stay or postpone the enforcement of execution or release from custody any person found guilty in any case. In this informal procedure the judge is the sole determiner of all decisions. If he decides the child has committed a crime of a serious nature and that by sending him to the Training School will help solve the case, this will undoubtedly be the final decision. In which case the judge commands an officer to take the child without delay to the superintendent of the state school. A certificate which is conclusive evidence of his or her age and residence is delivered to the superintendent of the school. Accompanying this warrant the judge

send a statement of the nature of the complaint, and other particulars concerning the child's life. The offender remains in the institution until he has become of age unless paroled before his sentence terminates.

13

30  
11  
130  
20  
150  
50

## Chapter II

### Scope of Inquiry

#### A. Meaning of the term Delinquent.

The phrase "delinquent child" as used in this study means: "Any child who, while under age of eighteen years, violates any law of this state or any ordinance of any city or town of this state; who is incorrigible, or intractable by parents, guardian, or custodian; absents <sup>him</sup> ~~his~~ self from <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ home or place of abode; who is growing up in idleness or crime;....who repeatedly plays truant from school...; who knowingly frequents or visits a house of ill repute; who patronizes, visits or frequents public poolrooms; who is found alone with one of the opposite sex in some private place; who wanders on the streets in the night time without being on any lawful business or lawful occupation; or habitually wanders about any railroad yards or tracks; who uses vile, vulgar, profane or indecent language; who drinks intoxicating liquors in any public place; or who is guilty of indecent, immoral conduct."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. Material and Method.

It is important to describe the sources of information and the methods employed in the investigation, in order that the results may be correctly understood. The court records constituted the initial body of data and served as the

1. Compiled Laws, South Dakota, Vol. 2, pp. 3406, 1929.

starting point and basis for the whole inquiry. With the approval of the juvenile judge, the records of all the delinquent cases actually handled and recorded by the court from January 1911-June 1932, were transcribed and tabulated. Because of the incompleteness of these records all phases of juvenile delinquency cannot be investigated. ✓

Other sources which provided information were: personal interviews with the judge and probation officers who have been engaged in juvenile delinquency work in Brookings County for a number of years.<sup>1</sup> Interviews with individuals who have been indirectly connected with the home life and the delinquent child made it possible to secure illustrative cases. A study of the school records of the delinquent children in the city of Brookings made it possible to draw conclusions concerning school ability or achievement of the delinquent children.

A study of the state laws on juvenile delinquency made it possible to know what is included under this statute and the method and procedure that is to be followed in handling such cases. ✓

1. Judge Hall has been the juvenile court judge of Brookings County for the past twenty-one years. Mrs. Lampson, probation officer for girls, has been engaged in such work in Brookings County for the past nine years.



Chapter III

an Ecological Study of Delinquent Cases

This study covers all of the one hundred and fifty six cases that have been recorded on the juvenile court records in Brookings County, January 1911, to June 1932. There have been a great many informal cases of which no record whatsoever is kept. This informal trial is nothing more than a warning to the individual to discontinue some act that may, if continued, cause the individual to be declared delinquent.

A. Ecological Distribution of Delinquent Cases in Brookings County.

Map number one shows the place of residence of delinquents in Brookings County. The twenty-three townships of Brookings County, and the number of delinquents in each township brought before the juvenile court, located at the county seat, which is the city of Brookings, South Dakota, are shown on this map. The population of these townships ranges from 348 in Richland township to 4,822 in Brookings township, according to figures taken from the 1930 Federal Census. One hundred seven or sixty-two and two tenths per cent of the delinquents lived in Brookings township and of this number one hundred one or ninety-five per cent lived within the city limits of Brookings, and six live in the rural districts of this township. I was unable to designate the locality in which ten people lived because of incomplete court records. The

LAKETON • • 437	PRESCON 422	EUREKA 407	ARSO 364	OAK LAKE 470	LAKE HENDRICKS 306
WINSOR 367	OAKWOOD 363	STERLING 469 BRUCE 371	ALTON 390	SHERMAN WHITE 533	403
BANGOR DARLINGTON 505	VOLGA 490 VOLGA 604	BROOKINGS 446 BROOKINGS 4376	AURORA 425	ALTON 306 BUSHNELL 134	340
LAKE SINAI 499 SINAI 217	OSLO 400	MEDARY 439	TRENTON 403 AURORA 166	PARNELL 426	ELKTON 257 ELKTON 856

Figures Indicate Population.

remain: thirty-nine delinquents live outside of Brookings township, but most of them live in townships bordering on Brookings township. This indicates that Brookings, the only city in the county with a population greater than 1,000 may exert influence on the juveniles of the surrounding townships. This may bring out the fact that in Brookings County there are more delinquents in a given incorporated town population than in an equal rural population. The reason for this is that a rural child associates mainly with his brothers and sisters and perhaps with one or two neighbor children. He does not have the opportunity to associate with or come in contact with many individuals of his own age. In the winter time when he is attending school he has little or no leisure time as after school hours he is kept busy doing the chores and other odd jobs. During the summer the country child is also kept busy. The nature of farming itself makes it possible for every member of the family to be kept busy at some work. Thus the rural child's mind is constantly engaged in something new to take up his interest. He makes infrequent visits to the city, and even then he is not there long enough to become intimate with those who are apt to be committing crime. On the other hand the city child seldom has any work or duties to perform after school hours, and during vacation he has long periods of time to dispose of as he pleases. He makes intimate acquaintances not only in his own neighborhood but throughout the entire city. This results in the formation of juvenile gangs even in a

cities shall be brookings.

During the summer of 1931 a gang modeled after and employing somewhat the same methods as those of the well-organized criminal gangs of Chicago was discovered in Brookings. This gang was made up of boys ranging in age from six to fourteen years. They had intimidated a boy with threats of death, and soon had him completely under their control. They extorted from him not only his weekly allowances but demanded even more. This little boy lived in fear of this gang for about six weeks and was led to steal, not only from his parents but other people, in order to satisfy the demands of the gang. He was so frightened by threats and demands that he dared not make the facts known, but finally was caught stealing and revealed the whole situation. Upon investigation of this gang and its "hang out" several rifles, revolvers and other stolen goods were found. Several of the gang were children of respectable citizens. Each parent <sup>7</sup> payed the damages caused by his child and returned the stolen money and goods taken from the little victim and thus the case was kept out of court and was never recorded on the books.

The above shows the greater temptation and tendency of the urban child toward crime.

Another fact brought out by map number one is that in nine of the townships there were no cases of juvenile delinquency. These were the less densely populated townships and had in them no villages or towns of any size. This too goes to support my previous contention that juvenile crime

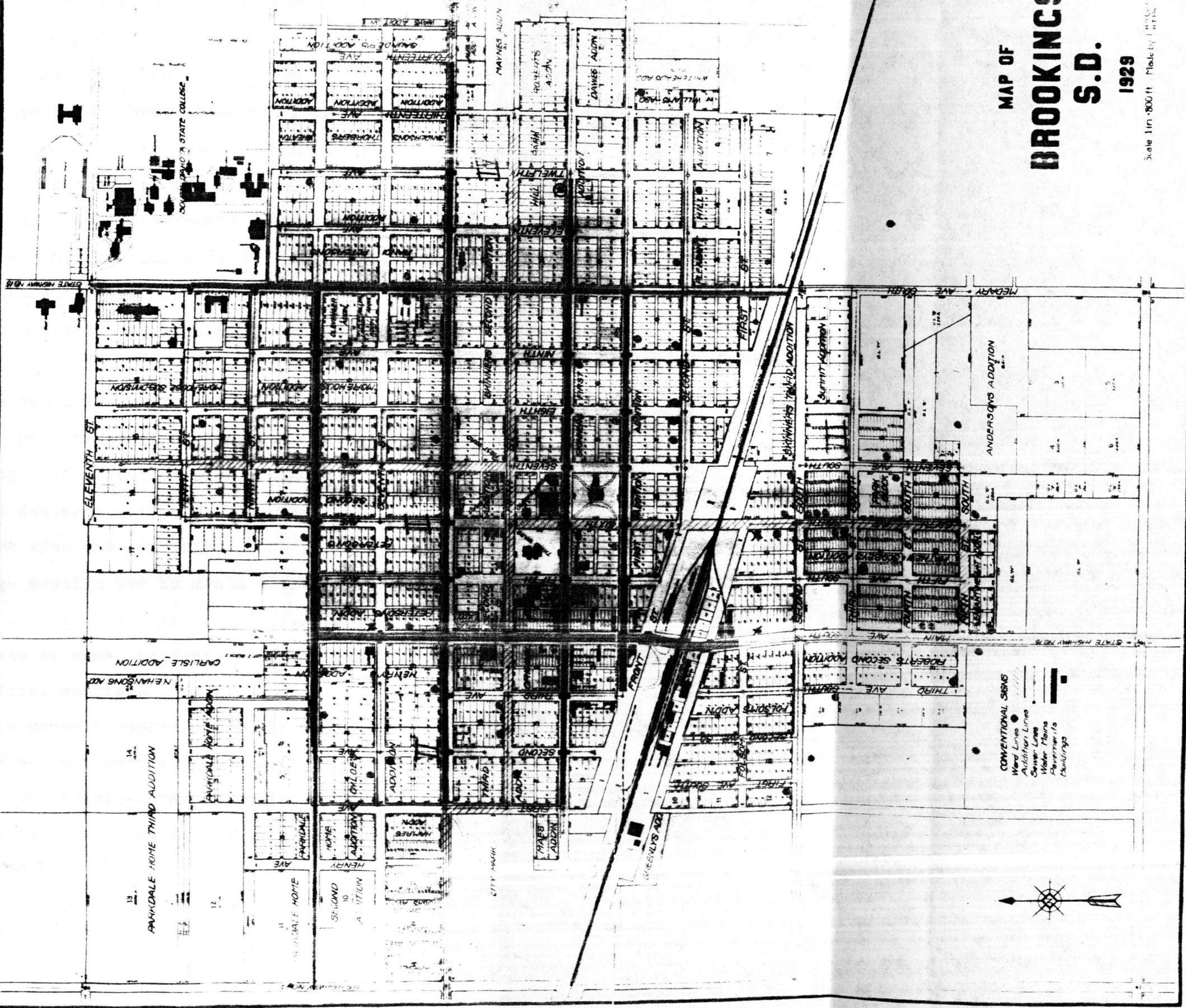
in residential areas, especially in the more densely populated areas, especially in cities and towns.

#### 5. Residential Areas of Juvenile Delinquents in the City of Brookings.

As about two-thirds of the total number of delinquents, both boys and girls, resided in the city of Brookings, I have made a special and complete study of their place of residence, so as to be able to draw some definite conclusions concerning the neighborhoods in which these individuals lived. The city of Brookings can well be divided into four sections: The first area bounded by eighth street on the North, the Chicago and Northwestern Railway tracks on the South, Main Avenue on the West, and Medary Avenue on the East, including an area of about forty square blocks; the second, extending from Main Avenue West to first avenue, an area including approximately fifteen square blocks; the third area, that which lies beyond and extends to the South of the tracks, includes an approximate area of twenty-five square blocks; the fourth section includes that territory East of Medary Avenue and North of eighth street, bordering on South Dakota State College campus with an area of forty-five blocks. All of these areas are shown on map number two.

I have arbitrarily set the boundaries of these areas, but it is evident that behavior traits overlap the different sections. The red dots on the map locate the delinquent children as to residence in each section. Dots crossed with an





to indicate that two delinquents came from the same home. Any dot crossed with an "x" and encircled indicates that from three to six individuals came from the same home.

I find that delinquents have come from twenty-two homes in section one. From personal observation and from statements of citizens, it appears that this section is the best residential district in the city and contains some of the finest families. Most of the delinquents from this area were brought before the court because of damage done to property or because of small thefts. These delinquents were not influenced in most cases by bad home environment or by poverty.

In area two there were ten delinquent cases. This section, while it is a very good residential district, is inhabited by a class of people of a little lower economic status. More children were declared delinquent in this section in proportion to the area and population than in the first section. Although section two is about thirty-eight per cent as large as the first in area and population, and the number of delinquents is equal to forty-six per cent of the delinquents of the first section.

The third area which is usually spoken of as the "South Side" and is considered the poorest section of the city, socially and economically. The twenty-seven delinquents in this section represents one hundred twenty-three per cent of those in section one. The area of the South side is

approximately sixty-two per cent of section one. The population of this area (third) is considerably less than that of the first. The reasons for the greater amount of crime in this smaller area are: (1) The poverty of the families lead the children to thefts and robberies; (2) This lower economic status brings with it lower morals, and this accounts for the prevalency of this type of crime, and also for the greater number of delinquent girls in this section; (3) The fact that this section is considered by the citizens as inferior to the others, has placed on it a bad reputation which these people cannot throw off. This may account, to a large degree, for the attitude of these people toward life and their subsequent low moral standards. The standards come to be reflected in the behavior of their children.

Section number four has produced twelve delinquents. An area of forty-five blocks is rather densely populated near the college, but the further removed blocks of this section are less densely populated. In area, this section is approximately the same as section one. The number of juvenile delinquents in this area is fifty five per cent of that in section one. The outer part of this section contains several of the newer additions to the city. Being further removed from the business areas the children are not found so frequently on the streets and are not tempted to commit crime in the same amount as is found in other areas.



## Chapter IV

### Statistical Analysis of Delinquent Cases

#### A. Summary of Delinquencies by Year.

In chart one I have recorded the number of juvenile crimes committed in Brookings County for each year during the period January 1911 to June 1932. There has been no marked secular trend during this period. The fluctuations have been violent, varying from zero to twenty-three. Since 1925 the two peaks in the curve have been considerably higher than the preceeding ones, and at the same time the low points have remained somewhat higher than the preceeding ones. This indicates a slight upward tendency of juvenile delinquency. This may be accounted for by the slight increase in population during this period. The figures from which chart one was prepared are tabulated in table one. X

#### B. Sex of Juvenile Offenders.

The number of delinquent boys and girls brought to court each year during the period studied are shown in table one. X Out of the one hundred and fifty-six cases recorded in the juvenile court records one hundred and thirty-three or eighty-five and two tenths per cent are boys and twenty-three or fourteen and seven tenths per cent are girls. Boys frequent the streets more than girls, form gangs rapidly and thus more of this sex have been recorded as juvenile delinquents. The above is the reason at least in part for a greater number

# JUVENILE CRIMES PER YEAR 1911-1932\*

## BROOKINGS COUNTY

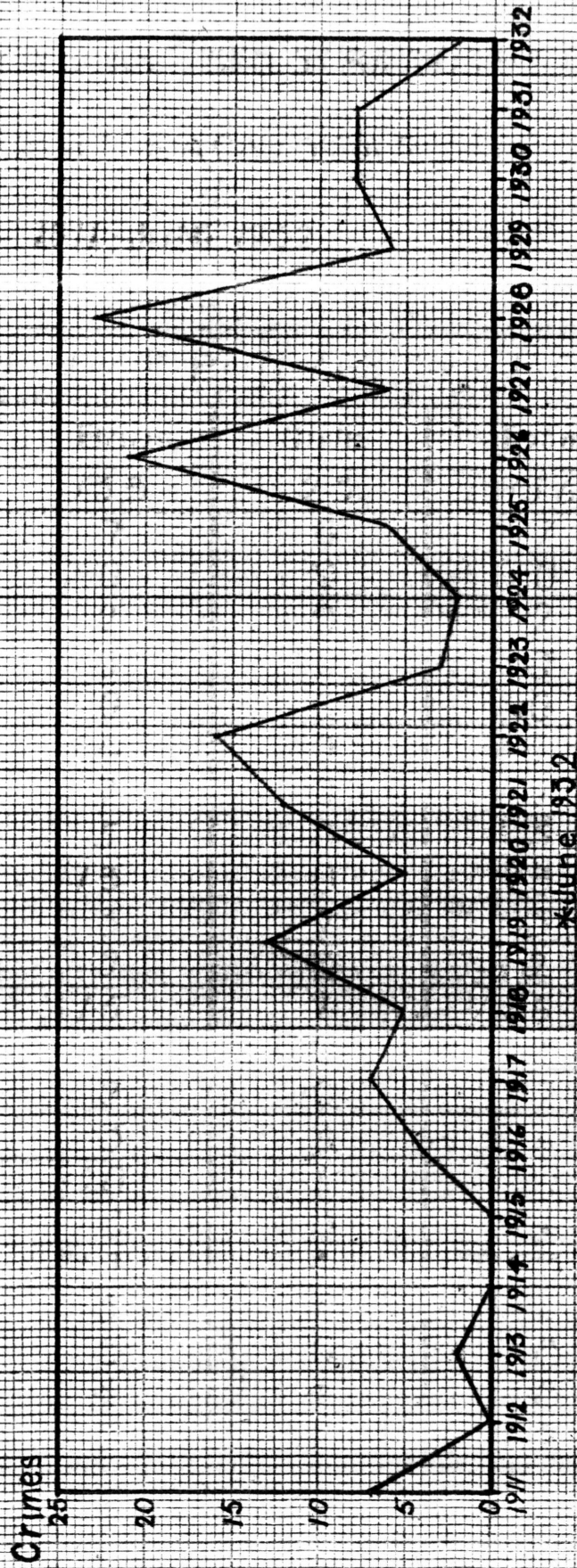




Table 1

# DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT TO COURT EACH YEAR

1911-JUNE 1932

Year	Number Of Boys And Girls In Court		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Total	133	23	156
1911	7	0	7
1912	0	0	0
1913	2	0	2
1914	0	0	0
1915	0	0	0
1916	4	0	4
1917	7	0	7
1918	5	0	5
1919	13	0	13
1920	3	2	5
1921	9	3	12
1922	15	1	16
1923	3	0	3
1924	2	0	2
1925	3	3	6
1926	20	1	21
1927	3	3	6
1928	19	4	23
1929	5	1	6
1930	8	0	8
1931	4	4	8
1932	0	2	2

From the girls who were brought to court, for the census reports shows approximately an equal number of both sexes under eighteen years of age.

During the first nine years of court history in Brookings County no girls were brought to court; this may be due to the fact that the officials were lenient in checking up on delinquents as it was a new institution and they naturally would not bring girls to court unless necessary.

The greatest number of boys brought to court in any one year was twenty in 1926. The greatest number of girls brought to court was four in 1928 and again in 1931.

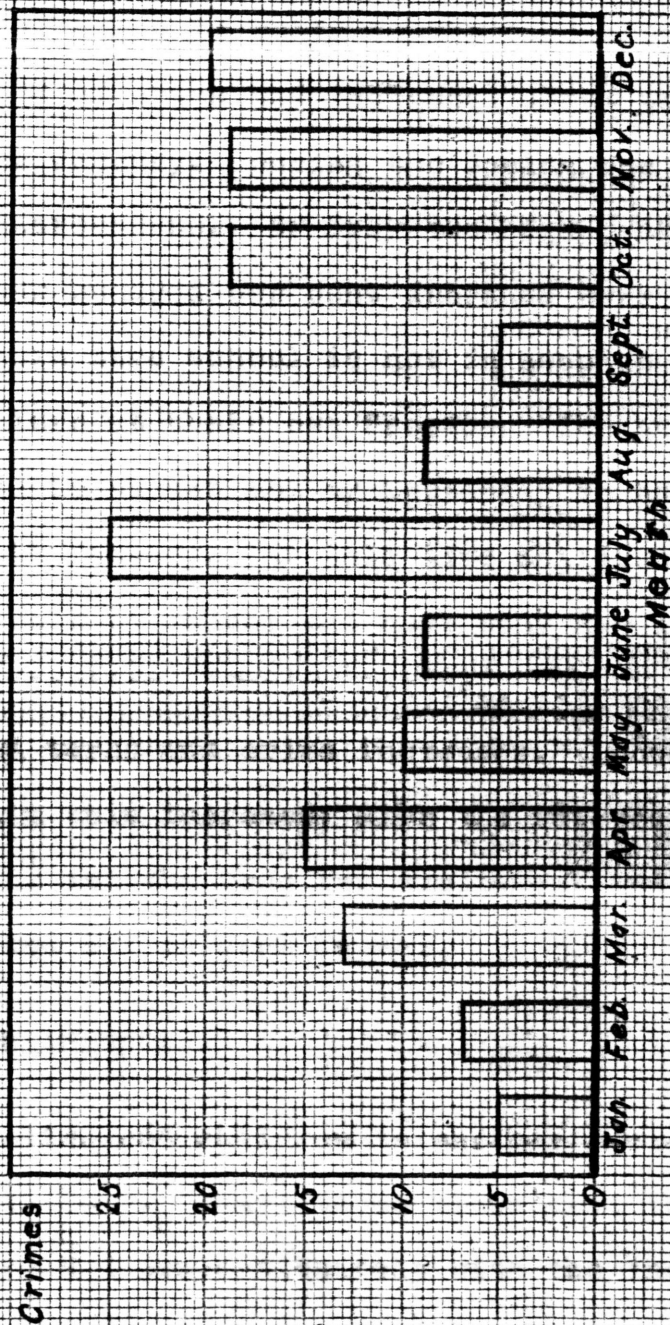
### 3. Seasonal Fluctuations in Delinquency.

Chart two shows the total number of delinquents brought to court each month during the period January 1911 to June 1932. While it is impossible to account for all these fluctuations in the number of children brought to court from month to month, some of the changes are not difficult to explain. From January through February, March and April, a gradual increase is noted in the number of crimes committed. In January and February the number of crimes is small and may be explained on the basis that at this time of the year children are more or less forced to remain indoors because of climatic conditions. There are also a greater number of school activities in which the children may direct their attention and thus forget about mischief. It is of interest to note that during these months the crime that was committed



# DELINQUENCIES PER MONTH

PERIOD - 1911-1932\*



June 1932

most apparent is that most of the individuals were convicted because of stealing. This point correlates with the statement made by Ford in which he says: "Such crimes against property as larceny should be more frequent in winter than in summer, may perhaps, be explained by the greater pressure of economic wants in the cold season."<sup>1</sup> By April the amount of crime had increased about two hundred per cent over January. During the Spring one would expect more mischievousness. By July the high peak is reached with a four hundred per cent increase over the month of January. At this time school is not in session and children are more or less at their own freedom. The amount of crime decreases in August and by September is back to an equal basis with January. At this time children of juvenile age are back to school and have many new interests to occupy their attention. During October, November, and December the trend turns and crime increases. Economic reasons may explain this increase; also the interest in school is declining and the urge for excitement and mischief must be worked off in some manner.

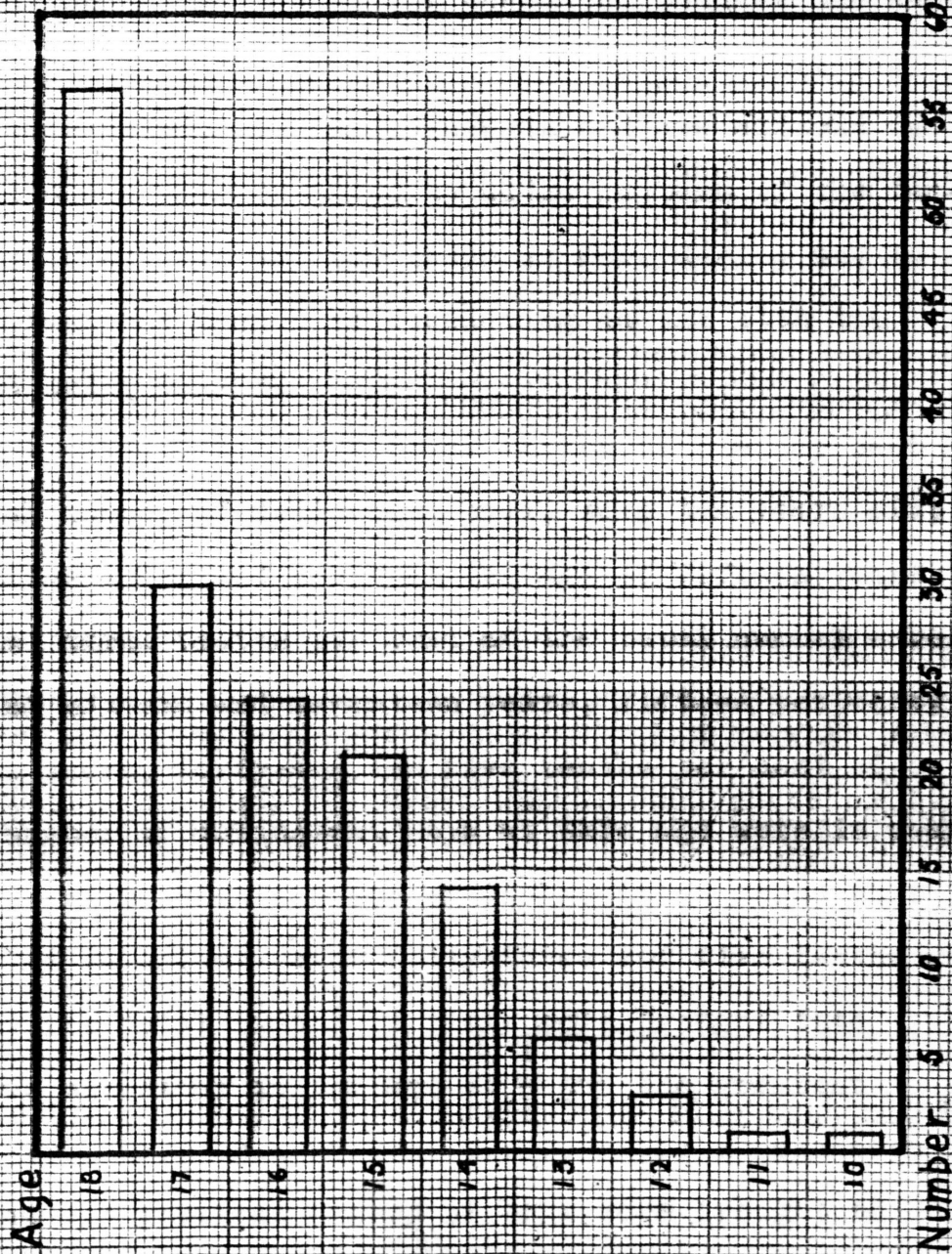
#### D. Age of Delinquents.

The age of delinquent children is another factor of importance in this study. Chart three shows that the number of crimes increased proportionately with the increase

1. Ford, Social Problems and Social Policy, p. 216.



DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS AT VARIOUS AGES 1911-JUNE 1932\*



\*June 1932

in 1927. Fifty-six per cent of the delinquents were eighteen years of age and nineteen per cent were seventeen years of age. The remaining forty-five per cent ranged from ten to sixteen years.

A great number of crimes are committed between the ages of fifteen to eighteen, because at this age the children are given more freedom by their parents and are allowed to leave their homes unaccompanied by older members of the family. Likewise at this age the child is more daring and is willing to take the chance of committing an act with the hope of not being caught.

Table two indicates that seven tenths of one per cent of the total number of delinquent boys, were ten years old; the percentage increased until at the age of fifteen years, fourteen and three tenths per cent of the total number were in court; at sixteen and seventeen years, fifteen per cent; at eighteen years, forty-one and five tenths per cent of the total number of delinquent boys at this age were in court.

In comparison with the age of girls, it is found that at the age of seventeen years forty-three and five tenths per cent of the total number of girls were brought into court. Thus seventeen is the age at which the greatest number of girls were brought into court, while at eighteen years of age the greatest number of boys were brought to court. Likewise a great many more boys proportionately were in court at an earlier age than girls. This difference is in part due to the fact that signs of waywardness in the



# DELINQUENT BOYS BROUGHT TO COURT EACH YEAR 1911-'32\*

## NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES - BY AGE

Age	Number Of Boys Brought TO Court Each Year																																Total	Per Cent
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32												
Total	7	0	2	0	0	4	7	5	13	3	10	13	3	3	3	19	3	19	4	7	7	1						133	100					
10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..						1	.7					
11	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..						0	.0					
12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..						1	.7					
13	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	..						5	3.8					
14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	2	..	2	..	..	1	1	..	2	..	1	..						12	9.0					
15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	4	1	..	..	6	..	3	..	2	1	..	..						19	14.3					
16	1	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	3	..	..	..	7	..	..	1	2	2	..	..						20	15.0					
17	..	..	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	1	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	..	2	..	..						20	15.0					
18	6	..	..	..	..	4	5	1	10	..	8	3	..	..	3	..	14	..	..	1	..						55	41.5						

# DELINQUENT GIRLS BROUGHT TO COURT EACH YEAR 1911-'32\*

## NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES - BY AGE

Age	Number OF Girls Brought TO Court Each Year																																Total	Per Cent
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32												
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	3	2	2	3	1	0	5	1	23	100										
10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0	0										
11	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4.3											
12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	8.7											
13	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1	4.3											
14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	8.7											
15	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	8.7											
16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	..	4	17.5											
17	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	1	2	1	..	2	..	10	43.5											
18	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	4.3											

\*June 1932

# DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT TO COURT 1911-1932\*

## TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES - BY AGE

Age	Total Both Sexes	BOYS		GIRLS	
		Number	Per Cent Total	Number	Per Cent Total
Total	156	133	100	23	100
10	1	1	.7	0	0
11	1	0	0	1	4.3
12	3	1	.7	2	8.7
13	6	5	3.8	1	4.3
14	14	12	9.0	2	8.7
15	21	19	14.3	2	8.7
16	24	20	15.0	4	17.5
17	30	20	15.0	10	43.5
18	56	55	41.5	1	4.3

\*June 1932



girl do not appear until she is older, since this waywardness almost invariably takes the form of sex delinquency. With the boy, there is more hope that he will "settle down" when he secures work; with the girl, work often means the beginning of temptation. A study of tables two and three show the number of delinquent boys and girls brought to court--the numbers and percentages are shown by age for each year.

### E. Nature of Offense.

Next in importance to the question of the age of these delinquent children is that of the offenses which have been the cause of their being brought to court.

Table four shows that the greatest number delinquent boys and girls who were brought into court during the twenty-one years were violators of the rights of property, or in other words petit larceny. This group of offenders made up forty-four and nine tenths per cent of the total number of delinquents.

A group of miscellaneous offenses are next in importance to stealing. This group makes up twenty-two and four tenths per cent of the total offenses and includes the following acts--breaking state game laws, loitering on the streets at night, assault, breaking windows, and destroying property in various ways. Incurability is next in importance with nine and six tenths per cent of the total offenses. In attempting to ascertain the precise "acts or facts" included under the above terms, an examination of the court records

Table 4

## DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT TO COURT

EACH YEAR FROM 1911-1932\*

## NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES BY OFFENSE

OFFENSE	Delinquent Boys And Girls Brought To Court During The Year 1911-1932																															Total	Per Cent
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32											
TOTAL	3	0	2	0	0	4	7	5	14	5	12	16	3	2	6	21	6	26	6	2	8	1	156	100									
Petit Larceny	1	..	2	..	..	1	..	1	4	2	3	7	2	2	..	12	3	12	1	8	2	..	70	44.9									
Grand Larceny	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	2	..	1	1	..	..	11	7.1										
Truancy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	4.5										
Incorrigible	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	3	4	2	1	3	1	15	9.6									
Forgery	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	5	3	..	1	2	..	..	12	7.7										
Sex	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	3.8										
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	..	7	10	..	5	6	..	..	..	..	3	..	7	..	..	3	..	35	22.4										

\*June 1932

showed that the terms stealing, burglary, larceny, attempted burglary, or attempted larceny, all of which are grouped together under petit larceny, covered a great many different offenses connected with the taking of property. For example, the property taken varied greatly in form and value, from the watermelons in the freight car to merchandise worth twenty-five dollars or more. Without minimizing the dangers into which the children may be led, it seems clear that a number of these acts are not vicious, but are performed in a spirit of harmless adventure and without adequate realization of their possibly serious consequences.

The word incorrigibility is here used to cover such misdemeanors as roaming the street late at night, using vulgar language on the streets, receiving money embezzled by others, refusing either to work or go to school as requested by parents, catching rides on cars, keeping bad company, refusing to obey parents, and staying away from home without permission. In many instances in which the child is classed as incorrigible or disorderly, appeal is made to the court to support a parental authority which should rest on early discipline. When a child is young and the parents confess or complain that they cannot control him, it is not only the child who deserves to be disciplined and possibly placed on probation but also the parents.

Forgery of checks is the next important offense with seven and seven tenths per cent of the total offenses. It is a practice that has been carried on by both boys and girls.



In a number of cases the chief cause of this offense was due to the fact that the children desired spending money and this seemed to be the easiest way, in their minds at least, to secure such funds.

It is of importance to note that three and eight tenths per cent of the offenders were accused of sexual offense. This group of offenders is made up almost entirely of girls.

Seven and one tenth per cent of the offenses were on complaint of charges of grand larceny. As this offense is of a serious nature most of the individuals were committed to the state training school.

Four and five tenths per cent of the offenders were charged with truancy. In this offense, the children were kept out of school frequently by the parents. Parents of these children lived on farms and took it for granted that their children could attend school as they saw fit.

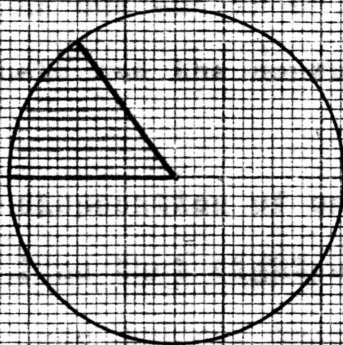
In a few instances children were brought to court because they were constantly running away and would not go to school when sent by parents. Instead of being in school they were loitering on the streets.

#### F. Court Disposition of Cases.

One's interest next turns to a study of the delinquents who are committed to institutions and those that are out on probation. Chart four shows that of the total number of both sexes (one hundred fifty-six), eighty-five and three tenths per cent have been out on probation, while fourteen and seven tenths per cent have been committed to the state

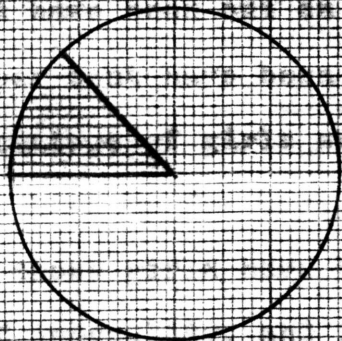
# DELINQUENTS COMMITTED TO INSTITUTIONS OR ON PROBATION 1911-1932\*

## BOTH SEXES



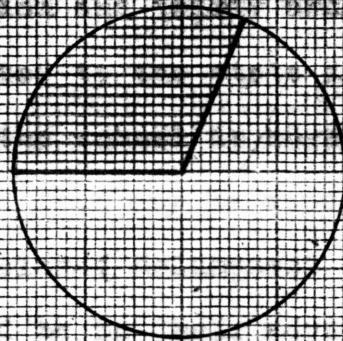
On Probation 85.3%  
Committed (Shaded Area) 14.7%

## BOYS



On Probation 87.0%  
Committed (Shaded Area) 13.0%

## GIRLS



On Probation 69.6%  
Committed (Shaded Area) 30.4%

\* June 1932



training school.

The judge of the Brookings County juvenile court is very considerate in determining in the first place whether or not the child should be recorded as a delinquent. Thus informal hearings are held before the judge, and if the delinquent causes no further trouble, the case is dismissed and is not recorded. Of course if the act is of a more serious nature, a formal hearing is held and the court proceeds in its regular manner.

In studying the disposition of cases according to sex of the offenders, we find that eighty-seven per cent of the total number of boys (one hundred thirty-three) have been on probation and thirteen per cent have been sent to the state training school.

In the case of the girls, sixty-nine and six tenths per cent have been out on probation and thirty and four tenths per cent have been committed to the state institution. The percentage of girls sent to the school is more than twice as high as for boys, though that may be expected as most of these girls have been declared delinquent on the basis of immorality, and it would be to their advantage to be taken away from their environment and associates.

When a child is committed to the state institution, either the sheriff or probation officer deliver him immediately to the institution. Reports from the institution show that the boys and girls cause very little trouble, if any, when once in the institution. Here it is the aim to educate the child as well as to give him proper training.

The judge finds it necessary to issue orders or rules that the delinquents must obey if they are placed under the supervision of a probation officer. In addition to these orders the probation officer is authorized to likewise make reasonable rules which the individual must obey while under his charge. Table five shows the orders given by the judge to delinquent children. He placed one hundred thirty-three people on probation. One hundred and ten orders were given that delinquents must report to officers at designated time, place, and give an account of their actions. In most cases the officer allows the individual a great many privileges. Probation officers have a definite amount of things the individual cannot do. Officers declare that as a rule they have very little trouble with people under their charge for the child is informed at the first visit that fair play is essential. In most of the orders some interested or reliable citizen is appointed to act as the officer, though in some instances the parents have been appointed. Both types of officers have proven to be successful in this county. Fifty-one orders were given to children that they must obey their parents and teachers. Other orders of importance are: attend school regularly, cannot loiter on the streets after nine o'clock, unless accompanied by parents, must obey all city ordinances, refrain from smoking and drinking, must not associate with immoral persons. A small number have been ordered to stay away from the pool

# SUMMARY OF THE COURT ORDERS 1911-JUNE 1932

Orders Of Court	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24	'25	'26	'27	'28	'29	'30	'31	'32	Total
On Probation	5	2	2	2	4	4	7	3	13	5	12	13	1	2	5	10	3	21	4	0	6	1	133
Report To Officer	..	2	2	2	6	6	7	2	0	4	4	12	2	2	5	15	4	21	4	9	6	1	110
Officer Legally Appointed	..	2	2	2	4	4	7	2	3	4	0	12	2	2	5	15	4	22	4	0	6	1	100
Obeu Parents, Teachers	..	2	2	2	3	3	3	13	2	2	11	1	2	2	1	1	16	1	1	1	1	1	51
Attend School Regular	..	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	5	5	9	2	2	2	4	1	16	1	1	1	1	1	40
Cannot Loiter On Streets	..	2	2	2	4	4	4	1	0	2	11	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	47
Obeu City Ordiances	..	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	7	3	19	3	4	2	47	
Sent To Training School	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	2	1	23	
Refrain From Smoking	..	2	2	2	3	3	3	5	2	5	2	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	19	
Refrain From Drinking	..	2	2	2	4	4	4	6	2	6	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	
Must Pay For Damages	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	7	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	
Keep From The Immoral	..	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	12	
Refrain From Movies	..	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	11	
Refrain From Pool Hall	..	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	



halls, and the movies. As a general rule these orders must be obeyed for a period of from four to six months. The judge also has ordered twenty-three delinquents to be delivered to the training school. This is taken care of very shortly after the order is given. Indications show that the delinquents are quite willing to obey these orders as they fear the idea of being sent to a training school. The fact that only nine individuals were repeaters also indicates that these orders are obeyed.

#### G. School Achievement of Delinquents.

A study of the school records of ninety-two juvenile delinquents in the city of Brookings showed that the majority of the boys and girls ranked as average students. After tabulating the information secured from the records, I found the following results: seven or eight per cent of the total number of delinquents had superior and excellent grades; fifty seven or sixty-two per cent of the total had achieved average school success; eleven or eleven percent of the total had fair grades; and seventeen or eighteen per cent were failures. According to a normal curve one would expect the distribution to be somewhat as follows: three per cent of the total number with excellent grades, twenty-two per cent superior grades, fifty per cent average, twenty-two per cent inferior, and three per cent failure. In comparing the results of chart five, as to school records, with the normal distribution curve, one immediately sees that the number

of failures in the delinquent group is above the expectancy. In other words the failure was eighteen per cent of the total number of delinquents in comparison to three per cent in a normal group. This large percentage of failures indicates that mental inferiority has a part in causing delinquency. On the other hand the number of delinquents with average ability surpasses the average group in a normal distribution curve by twelve per cent. Thus the percentages of the various grades of the delinquent group in the city of Brookings vary from the normal distribution curve.

Other facts brought out in chart five are that thirty-three delinquents entered high school, twelve of this number completed high school, fifteen dropped out of school between the sixth and eighth grades, two people were expelled while in the grades and two while in high school. I was unable to secure any information concerning the school rank of nine delinquents, because of this number, some had attended school in this city only a year, and in other cases the school records were incomplete.

## Chapter V

### Case Studies

In the following pages are presented a series of short paragraphs, each giving a briefly summarized statement of all the facts that could be secured relating to the home and family as well as to the alleged offense of the individual studied. The cases selected are those in which the facts collected were most complete. It is believed that a study of these simple statements of fact will help the reader to see the delinquent child as a human problem and not merely as an abstract question of social policy, as well as indicating some of the factors in the background.

1. An American family with fourteen children, seven of whom are still at home, -- the youngest about one year old. The parents were young when married and are old settlers in the community. The mother is descended from good stock, the father from fair parentage. Both have had some schooling. None of the children born to this family are defectives in any way. All of the children have attended school and are of average ability. Three remained in school through the eighth grade, and two entered high school, but dropped out during the second year. Six of the children, five girls and one boy, have been registered as offenders in juvenile court. Three of the girls appeared in court the same year. Five of the group have been charged with



associating with immoral persons of the opposite sex, and with incorrigibility. The mother is shiftless and has no responsibility as a mother and housekeeper, and naturally little pride in what type of associates her children select. The father is a common laborer, and has steady employment, with a fair income but not sufficient to support such a large family in a respectable manner. Home environment seems to bear the greatest influence on the children and appears to be the real cause of so much delinquency in this family. The home, owned by the parents, is a structure of three rooms, a very small kitchen, one bedroom, and a bedroom and living room combined. Its outward and inward appearance immediately discloses the type of people within, for cleanliness and sanitary conditions are not to be found. At one time thirteen people lived in this house. The word "privacy" has no meaning in this particular home. As a result several illegitimate children have been born. One illegitimate child died at birth and the other was taken by the probation officer from the home and has been adopted by very desirable and responsible people who take an intense interest in the child, which is indeed handsome and seems to be bright. One of the six delinquent children, was committed to the state training school, is now at home, but is again associating with immoral characters. It appears as if something must be done to prevent these girls from leading others in their community astray. Members of the family who are now at home, and old enough to seek employment make no attempt to find work. However, they would not be able to obtain employment where they are known, because of their previous reputation.



2. A poor, helpless American family with nine children. Mother and father were in the twenties when married. This is the second time the mother has married, she being divorced from her first husband after being married fifteen years. The second husband, a common laborer, attempts to keep employed but is never able to satisfy his wife with a sufficient income. The father is a Spanish War Veteran and now receives a pension of twenty dollars per month. The mother is shiftless and is not interested in her husband and family. The parents separate and the father moves to a different city taking two of the children with him. In the meantime the county finds it necessary to send two of the children to a tuberculosis sanatorium for treatment. The rest of the children are growing up in bad company and in crime. As a result, the older boy is brought into juvenile court with a number of charges being filed against him. He is charged with petit larceny, incorrigibility, truancy, and associating with immoral persons of the opposite sex. He was committed to the state training school with the intention of giving him better training than he was able to secure in his own home. Because of good behavior he was paroled and again returned to his home community. This winter he was again brought before the court on the charge of stealing coal and was returned to the training school to remain this time until he reaches the age of twenty-one years. Home environment is again responsible for this delinquency. At the present time the mother is seeking her second divorce on

the grounds of non-support and is anxiously awaiting for her third matrimonial adventure with a character as irresponsible as herself.

3. This particular case is more interesting when the family history of several previous generations is known. Grandmother C--, when thirteen years of age gave birth to an illegitimate child. Her parents, respectable people, had both died when she was seven, leaving this child to be cared for by any one who would take an interest in her. Grandmother C--, later marries and reproduces a family of thirteen children. A number of the children in this family were high grade morons. Only two of the thirteen children were good respectable citizens. The others were shiftless, some being arrested for disorderly conduct, and several had a mania for stealing. A daughter E--, gave birth to an illegitimate child T--, when fifteen years of age. This daughter E-- disappeared from home, after the birth of the child, with a married man. A year passed and she again returned to her home community. She was later married to a man G-- of low character and intelligence. One daughter D-- was born to this union. The family continued to live in poverty and the father was arrested several times for being a law violator, and at one time served a thirty days' sentence in jail because he was unable to pay the fine. During this time the first child T-- was being cared for in the home of the grandmother, which certainly was not a home for



bringing up children. The mother E-- divorces her husband and goes to Minneapolis where she again marries. When T was fourteen years old she gave birth to an illegitimate child with club feet. This child was cared for in grandmother C-- home. The County Welfare Board supported the child and obtained medical treatment for it. T-- continued to indulge in immoral practices and a complaint was filed by Grandmother C-- to the juvenile judge. She was put on probation and went out of the state to work in a home. Again, complaint was filed to the probation officer and T-- gave birth to a second illegitimate child. She was sent to the state training school and remained here until twenty-one years of age. At the age of twenty-two she had given birth to a third illegitimate child. At the present time she is living outside of the state, and is unmarried. The county and orphan homes are supporting these three children.

4. This girl is the daughter of American parents with a family of four children. The father was a very decent man and in business for himself. The father died a good many years ago. The mother was an adopted child of good foster parentage, and her first marriage proved to be quite happy. However, after the death of her first husband, she gradually became demoralized and has "gone to the bad." Her home became disreputable and her character was rapidly degrading, and she became a frequent law violator. Her daughter was rapidly following the practices of her mother.

A complaint was filed to the juvenile judge and after investigating she was brought before the judge and declared delinquent on the following charges: "incorrigible, associates with immoral persons, wanders on the streets at night without lawful business, and drinks excessively." She was committed to the state training school but was paroled on good behavior before she reached the age of twenty-one. She returned to her home but frequently violated her parole rules and was again returned to the state school. She was paroled the second time on condition that she would not return to her community. This delinquent child was very bright in her school work but entirely lacked home training which was so essential in her particular case.

5. This boy was one of five children of Irish-American parents. His parents were respectable citizens in the community and of moderate means. The father and mother were both diligent and hard workers and were intensely interested in the welfare of their children. Upon the death of the father the mother was left as the sole supporter of the children. She engaged in sewing as a means to help support and educate the children. The boy was brought to juvenile court at the age of fourteen with two other boys of the same age. They were charged with breaking into a pop-corn stand with intent to commit third degree burglary. They were declared delinquent by the judge and were out on probation for six months, and were required to

appear to the officer each week and report all their actions. This was a lesson to all three individuals who, today are successful business people in their community. The first boy mentioned has been especially successful. He is married, owns his own home and holds a very good paying position, and is a highly respected citizen and a great asset to his community. Mischief, no doubt was the cause of this act, and because of good home environment and training this one offense did not injure his character.

6. An American family with four children, two of whom are married. They live in an untidy home of five rooms. The parents are known to be law violators, both drank, quarreled, were accused of stealing, and both have been in jail. At the time the parents were in jail the children were at home alone. A probation officer was sent to the home to take the children away and secure for them a temporary home. In the meantime, relatives spirited away three of the children to Minnesota and Iowa. Upon release of the parents from jail, the two children again returned to their home. The father was arrested the second time and was sent to the state penitentiary. The mother was keeping company with other men and finally became infatuated with one particular individual. She brought suit for a divorce, and later married. The two children at home were little disciplined and were allowed to spend their time as they so desired, thus growing up in crime. One of the girls

was declared delinquent by the court and was sent to the training school because of indecent and immoral conduct. She was paroled from the institution and was allowed to go to the home of a married brother in another state. This older brother has a splendid reputation in his community, and seemed to have a great influence over his sister, who greatly reformed after getting away from her parental environment. She is now married and seems to be leading a respectable life.

7. A family with ten children. The mother has been married three times, and this boy, who is the child of her second husband, was in an orphan asylum from the time he was nine until he was thirteen years of age. His relations with his stepfather have never been pleasant. The stepfather is a common laborer, and makes good wages, but is very harsh and unkind to the children not belonging to him. The boy is not staying at home now; he says he is nagged and scolded so much. He has always been inclined to steal, and at one time when his mother had boarders he used to steal from them. He has an older sister who has been in court because of a minor offense. When the boy was sixteen, he was brought into court charged with larceny, and was sent to the training school. When released he was put under the care of a probation officer, who cooperated with the boy and his school teachers. His mother also helped some, but his stepfather took no interest as usual. A job was found in the country,

at which place the boy worked steady for over a year. He discontinued working at this farm home, but has not been employed steady since. His former employer was very interested in him, but he became convinced that the boy was "unreliable."

8. This case deals with an illegitimate child whose mental ability tests about a twelve year old. The child is a high grade moron. Her mother married several years later and four children were born to this union. The mother married at the age of sixteen years to a man of forty-five years of age. The father is a common laborer, could earn fair wages, but he works very little, drinks, and is cruel to the family, who are constantly dependent on charity. The mother is a hard working woman, who washes and scrubs in order to help support the family, and she really takes an interest in her children. The father was committed to the state penitentiary for forging checks. In a short time the mother secured a divorce, and today the county supports the family by paying the house rent and providing five dollars a month for groceries. With this aid and what the mother can earn, the family is able to survive. The illegitimate child finally passed through the seventh grade because of the goodness of her instructors. She found employment in a farm home outside the county and was capable of doing satisfactory work at this home. She later married and now is living in the state of Texas.



9. A very respectable family of five girls, all of whom have been very successful except one. The parents have been successful in life and have provided an opportunity for the entire family to become educated. The younger daughter seemed to be the problem of the entire family. At the age of sixteen she was brought into court on the complaint of her parents as being incorrigible, unmanageable, and associating with immoral persons, in spite of the parents opposition. She was to remain under the charge of a probation officer for four months. During this time she seemed to be doing as requested and forgot a great many of her associates. Later she was treated for a severe case of venereal disease. She married an irresponsible man and moved out of the state. She is not living with her husband, who has returned to his home community. His wife refuses to grant him a divorce, because she hopes that in this way she can keep him from marrying a friend.

10. Parents of the child moved into the community a short time ago from an adjoining state. It is a family of ten children whom the father deserts most of the time. However the father does make an attempt to support the family, although he does not remain at home. The mother, a handsome woman, educated, but is irresponsible and careless. This girl was brought to court on the complaint of forging checks. She pleaded guilty of purchasing articles in a store and in this way forged checks. She was placed under the

supervision of an officer for several months. At the expiration of this term she went to Minneapolis and lived a short time with a relative. Again she forged checks, but relatives settled for the charge. She was returned to her home community and was once again brought before court on the same charge. By this time she was completely unmanageable by her mother and thus the judge ordered that she be sent to the training school. Reports from the state institution show that she is very willing to obey all rules and regulations. She no doubt is awaiting to be paroled as she dreaded the penalty and was not accustomed to being under such close supervision.

11. This boy was an only child of American parents. His father is dead, and the mother, who was once a clerk, is well able to support the child. She has an ungovernable temper, at times verging on insanity. The neighbors think that at times she is not in her right mind. The boy used to work as a newsboy and an errand boy after school hours and always gave his earnings to his mother. At the age of fifteen years he was brought into court on a charge of incorrigibility because he ran away from school several times; he was out on probation. He was brought into court again charged with truancy, and was again put on probation. He was under the charge of a different probation officer for a period of one year. The officer took a great interest in the child and impressed upon him the importance of "playing square" with others. No doubt the fine personality of the

officer had a bearing on the boy for he became respected by his school mates, finished high school and is now attending an institution of higher learning and proving to be a success in his work.

12. A family with four children, of whom this boy is the eldest. The mother was nineteen when she was married. The father died when the children were little, and the mother remarried. The stepfather drank, was unkind to the children, and did not support the family so that the mother was always required to do any kind of work she was able to obtain. The home has always been in poor condition and untidy. When this boy was seventeen years old, he was brought into court for breaking the seal on a freight car and stealing watermelons. He was placed under the supervision of a probation officer and was required to report all actions for a period of four months. The officer feels it was the influence of the gang he was with that inspired him to break into the car. However, he has never had proper home training, and has been kept out of school frequently to assist his mother. He has never been in court again. He has worked for several farmers and has proven to be successful at his work. He is now likewise employed and gives all his wages to his mother.

The above twelve individual case studies indicate the great influence that home environment has upon the life of a child.

Children of juvenile age need good home environment and influence because this period of life is one of character building. When a wrong habit is once acquired by such plastic minds, it becomes fixed and as a result the child commits a wrong act unless he is supervised by good parental influence.

These cases show that children who are required to live in a home with immoral parents, or in a degrading neighborhood, are greatly influenced by the surrounding conditions. Such neighborhoods offer few facilities for play and many opportunities for wrongdoing.

Poverty is often a direct and compelling cause of delinquency. In such stricken families the mother is frequently required to work away from home; thus she gives little or no time to the training of her children. These children living in a home of poverty are deprived of many things they desire. They long for a little money to spend, for the delights of the theater, or adventure, and they will attempt to satisfy these desires in some manner, whether right or wrong. Thus we can understand how the simple fact of being poor is many times a sufficient explanation of delinquency.

Children who are required to live with unsympathetic step-parents have frequently been declared delinquent because either the step-father or step-mother were not interested in giving these children proper training.

**This study shows that better home environment is needed  
to curb juvenile delinquency.**



## Chapter VI

### Conclusions

The facts presented in this study show that in Brookings County we are going about one of our main duties in the protection of and attempt to better conditions among those children who have been declared delinquent, or those who are apt to be brought into court.

This study of one hundred fifty-six juvenile delinquents in Brookings County from January 1911-June 1932, shows that sixty-two and two tenths per cent of the delinquents lived in Brookings township, and of this number ninety-five per cent lived in the city of Brookings. This fact alone shows that juvenile delinquency tends to concentrate in centers of population.

Approximately six times more boys were declared delinquent than girls during this period of twenty-one years.

July is the month in which the greatest number of boys and girls were declared delinquent. October, November, and December rank next in the number of delinquents per month.

The greatest number of offenders ranged in age from fifteen to eighteen years. Thirty seven and two tenths per cent of the total number of delinquencies were committed at the age of eighteen years.

As to the nature of the offense, petit larceny is the cause of forty-four and nine tenths per cent of the total number of delinquents summoned to juvenile court during the

period, 1911-1932. In order to curb the number of petit larceny offenders, parents and people in frequent contact with children of juvenile age, teachers for instance, should instill in the minds of children that it is their duty as citizens to respect the property of others.

Eighty-five and three tenths per cent of the total number of delinquents were placed on probation, and fourteen and seven tenths per cent were committed to the state training school. Thirty and four tenths per cent of the total number of delinquent girls (twenty-three) were sent to the training school while thirteen per cent of the total number of delinquent boys (one hundred thirty-three) were sent to the training school. Sexual offenses among the girls accounts for most of the girls being sent to the training school.

This study shows that probation corrective institutions have been successful in curbing juvenile delinquency as only in a very few cases has it been necessary to bring the child before court a second time. Such institutions have been very definitely correctional and reformatory. There are various reasons in the minds of those in authority for committing individuals to an institution. It satisfies the offended; it gets the offender out of the way, that is, for the time being it prevents him from being a delinquent in open society; it supposedly deters others from committing offenses, and it offers some chance for the individual to be reformed.

The orders most frequently given by the juvenile judge to offenders were: that the delinquent was placed on probation

and must report to a designated officer; the offender must obey his parents and teacher; attend school regularly; and cannot loiter on the streets after nine o'clock unless accompanied by parents. No doubt if some of these orders had been practiced by parents before their children were brought to juvenile court such action by the court could have been avoided.

The study of the school achievement of ninety-two delinquents of the city of Brookings showed that seven or eight per cent of the total number of delinquents had superior and excellent grades, fifty seven or sixty two per cent of the total had average grades, eleven or eleven per cent had fair grades, and seventeen or eighteen per cent were failures. Thirty-five delinquents entered high school, and twelve of this number finished high school. The large percentage of failures among the delinquents indicates that mental inferiority plays a part in causing delinquency.

The twelve case studies revealed facts concerning the background of delinquents. It was impossible to carry this method of study in greater detail because the size of the community will not lend itself to such a detailed procedure. However, these case studies have definitely shown that home environment and influence have been the chief factors leading to the cause of delinquency. If children living under such unfavorable environment could be removed from their homes, at an early age, and placed in county homes or private homes, of a desirable type, a change in environment would

produce a change in character. Another probable suggestion is to have our educational institutions stress the idea of better home environment and the improvement of standards of living to our younger generation of today, with the hope that these children will become interested as they grow older, in adjusting themselves to the best of environment.

It is always an advantage to have boys and girls between the age of ten and eighteen lined up with some constructive activities, especially in the summer time when they are not in school. Junior Baseball Leagues for the boys should be stressed more, and an attempt should be made to interest boys in this movement whose home environment and influence is not of the best. Scout organizations for both boys and girls could work out an effective program to attract individuals subject to delinquency. Likewise, a new exploration, as a Big Brother and Big Sister Federation would prove to be an effective means of taking care of the leisure time of boys and girls. This organization should be supervised by an individual interested in the welfare of children. Older boys and girls should be given the opportunity to organize clubs, leagues, teams and the like in their particular neighborhood. Contests can be held between the various groups. This type of activity would attract the interest of children and would keep them from harmful mischief during vacation time.

The juvenile court is a living and growing institution in Brookings County, South Dakota. Whatever form its future

development may take, if it advances steadfastly in the scientific, possessing sympathetic and understanding study of the children with whom it deals, and in perfecting of the remedies it offers, it cannot fail to contribute to individual happiness and social welfare.



## General Bibliography

### Books

- Cantor, N. F., *Crime Criminals and Criminal Justice*,  
Chapter VI-VIII, pp. 73-116, Henry Holt  
and Co., N. Y., 1932.
- Ford, James, *Social Problems and Social Policy*,  
Chapter XXXIX, pp. 991-1003, Ginn and  
Co., Chicago, 1923.
- Gillin, Dittmer, and Colbert, *Social Problems*,  
Chapter XX, pp. 426-465, The Century Co.,  
N. Y., 1932.
- Mangold, G. B., *Social Pathology*,  
Chapter XXI, pp. 491-522, MacMillan Co.,  
N. Y., 1932.
- Sutherland, E., *Criminology*,  
Chapter XIII, pp. 283-314, Lippincott Co.,  
Pa., 1924.

### Periodicals.

- Baker, H. M., "The Court and the Delinquent Child,"  
*American Journal Sociology*, 26, p. 177,  
1920.
- Eliot, T. D., "The Juvenile Court and the Community,"  
*American Journal Sociology*, 26, p. 209,  
1920.
- Lenroot, K., "Evolution of the Juvenile Court," *Annals*  
*American Academy*, 105, pp. 213-223, 1923.

Pratt, "The Juvenile Court--Is it Necessary," Survey,  
47, p. 442, 1921.

Thurston, "Is Juvenile Court Passing?", Survey, 47,  
pp. 119-123, 1921.

Waite, "The Outlook for the Juvenile Court," Annals  
American Academy, 105, pp. 229-242, 1923.